

Music Director's Report



Ian Roberts photographed with the Cathedral and Nave Choirs (photos by Will Hay)

The start of the New Year was busy. Ian (our Assistant Director of Music) and Kate Roberts left us for St John's Church, Ranmoor in Sheffield and preparations had to be made for Ian's replacement and the need for us to organise the daily worship of the cathedral between Laurence (our Organ Scholar) and me once Ian had left. Ian and Kate's last day with us was the 27 February and presentations to them were held after the 10am Sung Eucharist on behalf of the Cathedral Congregation and after Evensong on behalf of the Cathedral Choir. The number of gifts presented was testament to the affection and esteem in which they are held. A handsome thirteen volume set of Louis Vierne's Complete Works for Organ presented to Ian will keep him busy for some years to come!

An advertisement was placed in the Church Times in January for an Assistant Director of Music and no fewer than twenty-six enquiries were made and sixteen applications were received for the post. Four candidates (already Assistants in other cathedrals) were short-listed, and, after thorough audition and interview, Ben Chewter, currently Assistant Organist at Lincoln Cathedral, was appointed. We look forward very much to welcoming Ben to Chester when he begins in September. In the meantime, we were pleased to welcome back former Organ Scholar Geoffrey Woollatt for a period of three weeks to assist us over Lent in the accompanying

of the Cathedral Choir and Nave Choir. Laurence stepped up to the challenge of much more choir directing and overall responsibility and I am very grateful for his support.

The choristers have sung no fewer than three Daily Service broadcasts this term for BBC Radio 4 and their reputation is continuously growing amongst listeners and the producers of the programme. This term we welcomed our new Decani Tenor David Hardwick, who, having

started his musical career as a chorister at Worcester Cathedral and subsequently Lay Clerk at Gloucester Cathedral, moved to Chester in March to seek work as a secondary school teacher whilst singing in the choir.

The Nave Choir continues to flourish and can be regularly heard singing Compline at 6.30 on Sundays. A concert of music by Carissimi, Monteverdi and Lassus was given by the Nave Choir on 12 February to a capacity audience in the Quire.

The Saturday Singing Club goes from strength to strength with a number of new members joining in recent months. Support by the Friends for this is much appreciated and allows the Club to continue to encourage children of primary school age across Chester to sing and have fun in our magnificent Song School. The *Singing Partnership* project is now under way in four local schools where yet more children will benefit from working with our music department

Philip Rushforth (Director of Music)



Philip Rushforth and the Choir in Abbey Square on Palm Sunday
(see other photos opposite)

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- 10% discount in the Cathedral Shop and the Cathedral Refectory Cafe (min. spend £10)
- Free entry to the Cathedral with one guest. (again on presentation of the card.)